

Frequently Asked Questions

Tuition Assistance

1. Who is eligible for tuition assistance?
 - a. Employees required to meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development are eligible for assistance at this time. Primarily that refers to vocational rehabilitation counselors, case managers and field branch managers.
2. Is there a payback agreement or a time commitment when receiving tuition assistance from the agency?
 - a. The agency requires that you work 2 years beyond the completion of the degree in order to fulfill the payback agreement. Each time an employee signs the agency tuition assistance form it grants permission to the state to recover the monies in whole or in part for the amount of the agreement not paid back according to the policy.
3. Can I pay the school and have the agency reimburse the funds like we do with other training programs?
 - a. State guidelines prohibit the agency from paying tuition assistance funds directly to an employee. The funds must be paid through the proper paperwork filed with the school at least 30 days prior to the beginning of classes.
4. Other than tuition assistance is there other funding available for education?
 - a. Educational Achievement Awards are sometimes an option. Recommendations for EAA are based on funding availability and not a guaranteed right for an employee. Specific guidelines for an EAA are available on the personnel website and use of these depends on the budgetary constraints of the agency. (Due to budget constraints there are no EAA approvals at this time)
5. Can state time be utilized for class time or online courses for a degree program?
 - a. State time may not be utilized for courses provided through tuition assistance toward the completion of a degree program. This includes courses online, at distance learning sites or those on campus.
6. Can an employee take a course at a local college or university if it is not part of a degree?
 - a. An employee may request assistance on a course-by-course basis for approved courses by following the guidelines provided in the tuition assistance policy.
7. Where are the acceptable degree programs and course listings located?
 - a. The list is located under the tuition assistance policy section.
8. What if the desired course is not listed?
 - a. The tuition assistance policy makes allowance for requesting an exception, but there is a specific timeline for making the request and specified information that needs to be included in the request. The policy provides the details necessary to make the request.
9. Does the agency pay for the Graduate Records Exam, Scholastic Achievement Test or other standardized test required for admission into a college or university?

- a. Tuition assistance is only allowed for master's level programs, therefore the agency does not provide for costs associated with undergraduate degrees such as the SAT or the ACT.
- b. If an employee meets the criteria for tuition assistance in a master's program and the GRE is a requirement for admission into the approved program of study the agency will pay for the cost of the exam.
 - i. The cost of the GRE may be paid using the agency procard. Costs for travel to the exam site and time needed to travel or take the exam is not provided. Employees and managers may work together to utilize leave or flex schedules to accommodate the testing schedule.